

IN THE CLAIMS

The entire set of pending claims, including amendments to the claims, is submitted herewith pursuant to 37 CFR § 1.121(c)(3). This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application.

1. (Previously presented) A guide catheter having proximal and distal ends, comprising:

an outer guide having an open lumen and a longitudinal pre-stress line extending between a distal end and a proximal end of the outer guide;

an inner guide having an open lumen, the inner guide movably disposed within the open lumen of the outer guide such that the inner guide can rotate axially and translate longitudinally relative to the outer guide;

a guide handle having a distal end connected to the proximal end of the outer guide, the guide handle separable into at least two sections such that guide handle separation splits the outer guide along the longitudinal pre-stress line at the proximal end of the outer guide, the outer guide further splitting along the longitudinal pre-stress line upon outer guide retraction in a proximal direction relative to the inner guide; and

a steering member disposed along the outer guide, a distal end of the steering member connected at a distal end of the outer guide, and a proximal end of the steering member accessible at the proximal end of the outer guide, whereby application of a tensile force to the proximal end of the steering member effects deflection of the distal end of the outer guide.

2. (Original) A guide catheter according to claim 1, wherein the longitudinal pre-stress line comprises a V-shaped notch on a surface of the outer guide.

3. (Original) A guide catheter according to claim 2, wherein the outer guide further comprises a second longitudinal pre-stress line situated opposite the longitudinal

pre-stress line on the surface of the outer guide.

4. (Original) A guide catheter according to claim 3, wherein the second longitudinal pre-stress line comprises a V-shaped notch on a surface of the outer guide.

5. (Previously presented) A guide catheter according to claim 1, wherein the steering member comprises a steering tendon disposed within the outer guide, a distal end of the steering tendon connected to the distal end of the outer guide, such that the steering tendon deflects the distal end of the outer guide upon application of a tensile force to a proximal end of the steering tendon.

6. (Original) A guide catheter according to claim 5, further comprising a steering mechanism connected to the proximal end of the steering tendon, the steering mechanism applying a tensile force to the proximal end of the steering tendon.

7. (Original) A guide catheter according to claim 6, wherein the steering mechanism is connected to the guide handle.

8. (Original) A guide catheter according to claim 7, wherein the steering mechanism includes a steering handle pivotably mounted to the guide handle.

9. (Original) A guide catheter according to claim 1, wherein a distal end of the inner guide includes a pre-formed curve.

10. (Original) A guide catheter according to claim 1, further comprising:
at least one electrode on the distal end of one or both of the inner guide and outer guide; and

at least one electrical conductor coupled to the at least one electrode, the at least one conductor disposed within one or both of the inner guide and outer guide.

11. (Original) A guide catheter according to claim 1, further comprising an occlusion device connected to the distal end of the outer guide.

12. (Original) A guide catheter according to claim 1, further comprising an occlusion device connected to a distal end of the inner guide.

13. (Previously presented) A guide catheter for delivery of a payload into a patient's heart, comprising:

an outer guide having an open lumen and a longitudinal pre-stress line extending between a distal end and a proximal end of the outer guide;

an inner guide having an open lumen adapted to receive the payload, the inner guide movably disposed within the open lumen of the outer guide such that the inner guide can rotate axially and translate longitudinally relative to the outer guide, the inner guide having a stiffness less than that of the outer guide;

a guide handle having a distal end connected to the proximal end of the outer guide, the guide handle separable into at least two sections such that guide handle separation splits the outer guide along the longitudinal pre-stress line at the proximal end of the outer guide, the outer guide further splitting along the longitudinal pre-stress line upon outer guide retraction in a proximal direction relative to the inner guide, the stiffness of the inner guide relative to the outer guide sufficient to inhibit dislodgment of the payload as the outer guide moves in a proximal direction over the inner guide during outer guide retraction; and

a steering member disposed along the outer guide, a distal end of the steering member connected at a distal end of the outer guide, and a proximal end of the steering member accessible at the proximal end of the outer guide, whereby application of a tensile force to the proximal end of the steering member effects deflection of the distal end of the outer guide.

14. (Original) A guide catheter according to claim 13, wherein the longitudinal pre-stress line comprises a V-shaped notch on a surface of the outer guide.

15. (Original) A guide catheter according to claim 14, wherein the outer guide further comprises a second longitudinal pre-stress line situated opposite the longitudinal pre-stress line on the surface of the outer guide.

16. (Original) A guide catheter according to claim 15, wherein the second longitudinal pre-stress line comprises a V-shaped notch on a surface of the outer guide.

17. (Previously presented) A guide catheter according to claim 13, wherein the steering member comprises a steering tendon disposed within the outer guide, a distal end of the steering tendon connected to the distal end of the outer guide, such that the steering tendon deflects the distal end of the outer guide upon application of a tensile force to a proximal end of the steering tendon.

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24. (Previously presented) A guide catheter according to claim 13, further comprising a steering mechanism connected to the proximal end of the steering member, the steering mechanism applying the tensile force to the proximal end of the steering member.

25. (Previously presented) A guide catheter according to claim 24, wherein the steering mechanism is connected to the guide handle.

26. (Previously presented) A guide catheter according to claim 24, wherein the steering mechanism comprises a steering handle pivotably mounted to the guide handle.

27. (Previously presented) A guide catheter according to claim 13, wherein a distal end of the inner guide includes a pre-formed curve.

28. (Previously presented) A guide catheter according to claim 13, further comprising:

at least one electrode on the distal end of one or both of the inner guide and outer guide; and

at least one electrical conductor coupled to the at least one electrode, the at least one conductor disposed within the one or both of the inner guide and outer guide.

29. (Previously presented) A guide catheter according to claim 13, further comprising an occlusion device connected to the distal end of the outer guide.

30. (Previously presented) A guide catheter according to claim 13, further comprising an occlusion device connected to a distal end of the inner guide.

31. (Previously presented) A guide catheter according to claim 13, wherein the payload comprises a pacing lead.